

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

April 17, 2008

The Honorable Daniel K. Inouye, Chairman
Subcommittee on Defense
U.S. Senate Committee on Appropriations
119 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510-6028

The Honorable Ted Stevens, Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Defense
U.S. Senate Committee on Appropriations
119 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510-6028

Dear Chairman Inouye and Ranking Member Stevens:

The war in Iraq has come at an enormous cost to our nation in both lives and treasure. Recent estimates have placed the financial costs of the war at about \$12 billion a month, a cost borne by present and future American taxpayers.

Over the past several weeks, media and government reports have provided a clearer picture of Iraq's improved financial situation. As a result of record-high oil prices, Iraq is expected to experience a significant financial windfall through oil revenues that has been estimated to be almost \$56 billion, while domestic gas prices reach new highs and negatively impact our economy at home.

The time has come to end this blank check policy and require the Iraqis to invest in their own future. We believe that it is time for Iraq to take greater responsibility for the costs of its reconstruction and stabilization. We are pleased that the Administration agrees and that certain steps are underway to require Iraq to pay some of the war and reconstruction costs.

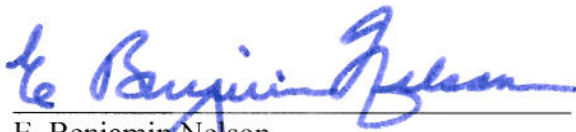
In 2003, then-Deputy Secretary of Defense Paul Wolfowitz said, "We're dealing with a country that can really finance its own reconstruction, and relatively soon." Instead, over the last five years, the United States has financed Iraq's reconstruction for more than \$45 billion. While it appears that the U.S. share of level reconstruction funding has declined, the American taxpayers are still subsidizing projects that should be funded by the Iraqis themselves. It is time for the Iraqi government to demonstrate its commitment to its own success by assuming some of the financial burden.

As Congress goes forward with the next Supplemental funding bill, we believe that efforts should be made to ensure that America ends this blank check to the Iraqi government. We intend to offer an amendment to the Supplemental to require many of these costs to be provided in the form of a loan. While it is critical that funding for reconstruction and the needs of our troops continue to be available in an accessible manner, there is no reason why our government cannot negotiate a loan repayment/reimbursement plan with the Iraqis. In addition to loans, we believe that Iraq should make direct payments and/or reimbursements for our costs where possible, including the cost of fuel consumed in Iraq by American forces. We hope that you will work with us on ensuring that American taxpayers do not continue to foot the bill for Iraq's reconstruction and certain other expenses.

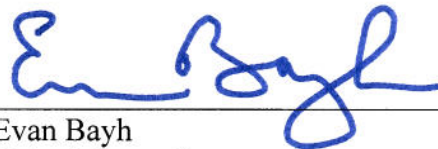
It is not our intent to punish or harm the government of Iraq; rather, we believe this is an opportunity to demonstrate Iraq's greater independence from the United States. Ultimately, it is our hope to increase Iraq's financial commitment for its own well-being while reducing the burden to the American taxpayer. It is time to end the blank check to the Iraqi government.

We look forward to working with you and the Committees in this effort.

Sincerely,



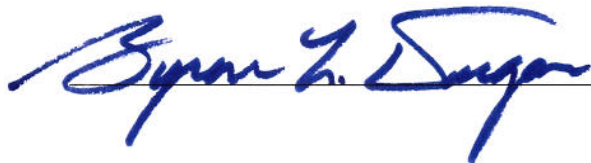
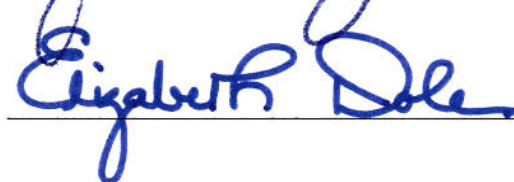
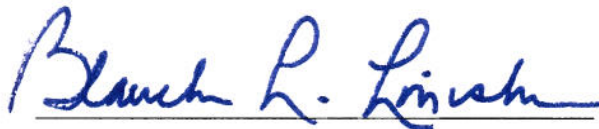
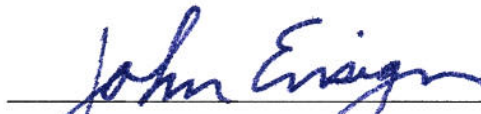
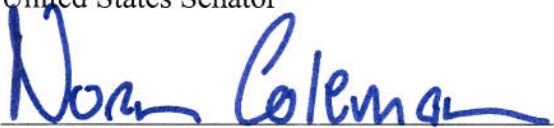
E. Benjamin Nelson
United States Senator



Evan Bayh
United States Senator



Susan M. Collins
United States Senator



United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

April 17, 2008

The Honorable Harry Reid
Majority Leader
United States Senate
528 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510-0001

Dear Majority Leader Reid:

The war in Iraq has come at an enormous cost to our nation in both lives and treasure. Recent estimates have placed the financial costs of the war at about \$12 billion a month, a cost borne by present and future American taxpayers.

Over the past several weeks, media and government reports have provided a clearer picture of Iraq's improved financial situation. As a result of record-high oil prices, Iraq is expected to experience a significant financial windfall through oil revenues that has been estimated to be almost \$56 billion, while domestic gas prices reach new highs and negatively impact our economy at home.

The time has come to end this blank check policy and require the Iraqis to invest in their own future. We believe that it is time for Iraq to take greater responsibility for the costs of its reconstruction and stabilization. We are pleased that the Administration agrees and that certain steps are underway to require Iraq to pay some of the war and reconstruction costs.

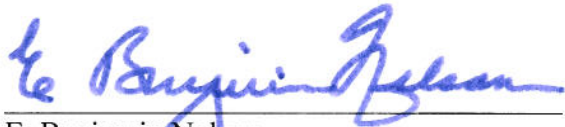
In 2003, then-Deputy Secretary of Defense Paul Wolfowitz said, "We're dealing with a country that can really finance its own reconstruction, and relatively soon." Instead, over the last five years, the United States has financed Iraq's reconstruction for more than \$45 billion. While it appears that the U.S. share of level reconstruction funding has declined, the American taxpayers are still subsidizing projects that should be funded by the Iraqis themselves. It is time for the Iraqi government to demonstrate its commitment to its own success by assuming some of the financial burden.

As Congress goes forward with the next Supplemental funding bill, we believe that efforts should be made to ensure that America ends this blank check to the Iraqi government. We intend to offer an amendment to the Supplemental to require many of these costs to be provided in the form of a loan. While it is critical that funding for reconstruction and the needs of our troops continue to be available in an accessible manner, there is no reason why our government cannot negotiate a loan repayment/reimbursement plan with the Iraqis. In addition to loans, we believe that Iraq should make direct payments and/or reimbursements for our costs where possible, including the cost of fuel consumed in Iraq by American forces. We hope that you will work with us on ensuring that American taxpayers do not continue to foot the bill for Iraq's reconstruction and certain other expenses.

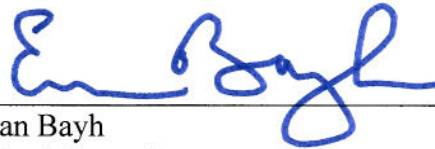
It is not our intent to punish or harm the government of Iraq; rather, we believe this is an opportunity to demonstrate Iraq's greater independence from the United States. Ultimately, it is our hope to increase Iraq's financial commitment for its own well-being while reducing the burden to the American taxpayer. It is time to end the blank check to the Iraqi government.

We look forward to working with you and the Committees in this effort.

Sincerely,



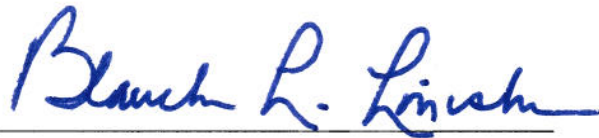
E. Benjamin Nelson
United States Senator



Evan Bayh
United States Senator



Susan M. Collins
United States Senator



United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

April 17, 2008

The Honorable Robert C. Byrd, Chairman
Committee on Appropriations
United States Senate
U.S. Capitol, Room S-131
Washington, DC 20510-6025

The Honorable Thad Cochran, Ranking Member
Committee on Appropriations
United States Senate
U.S. Capitol, Room S-131
Washington, DC 20510-6025

Dear Chairman Byrd and Ranking Member Cochran:

The war in Iraq has come at an enormous cost to our nation in both lives and treasure. Recent estimates have placed the financial costs of the war at about \$12 billion a month, a cost borne by present and future American taxpayers.

Over the past several weeks, media and government reports have provided a clearer picture of Iraq's improved financial situation. As a result of record-high oil prices, Iraq is expected to experience a significant financial windfall through oil revenues that has been estimated to be almost \$56 billion, while domestic gas prices reach new highs and negatively impact our economy at home.

The time has come to end this blank check policy and require the Iraqis to invest in their own future. We believe that it is time for Iraq to take greater responsibility for the costs of its reconstruction and stabilization. We are pleased that the Administration agrees and that certain steps are underway to require Iraq to pay some of the war and reconstruction costs.

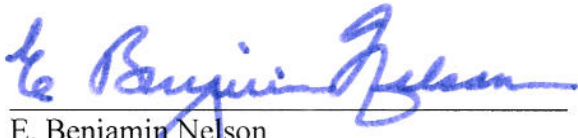
In 2003, then-Deputy Secretary of Defense Paul Wolfowitz said, "We're dealing with a country that can really finance its own reconstruction, and relatively soon." Instead, over the last five years, the United States has financed Iraq's reconstruction for more than \$45 billion. While it appears that the U.S. share of level reconstruction funding has declined, the American taxpayers are still subsidizing projects that should be funded by the Iraqis themselves. It is time for the Iraqi government to demonstrate its commitment to its own success by assuming some of the financial burden.

As Congress goes forward with the next Supplemental funding bill, we believe that efforts should be made to ensure that America ends this blank check to the Iraqi government. We intend to offer an amendment to the Supplemental to require many of these costs to be provided in the form of a loan. While it is critical that funding for reconstruction and the needs of our troops continue to be available in an accessible manner, there is no reason why our government cannot negotiate a loan repayment/reimbursement plan with the Iraqis. In addition to loans, we believe that Iraq should make direct payments and/or reimbursements for our costs where possible, including the cost of fuel consumed in Iraq by American forces. We hope that you will work with us on ensuring that American taxpayers do not continue to foot the bill for Iraq's reconstruction and certain other expenses.

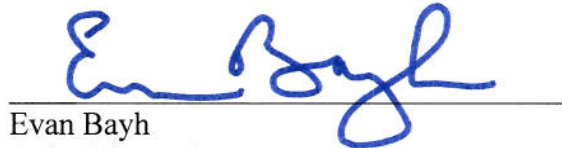
It is not our intent to punish or harm the government of Iraq; rather, we believe this is an opportunity to demonstrate Iraq's greater independence from the United States. Ultimately, it is our hope to increase Iraq's financial commitment for its own well-being while reducing the burden to the American taxpayer. It is time to end the blank check to the Iraqi government.

We look forward to working with you and the Committees in this effort.

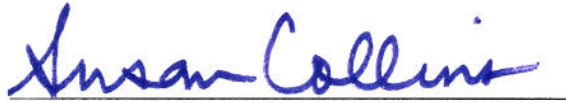
Sincerely,




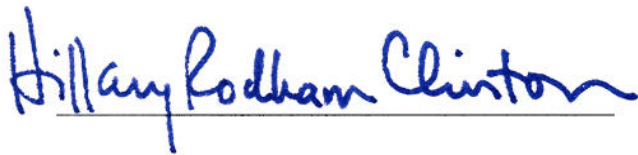
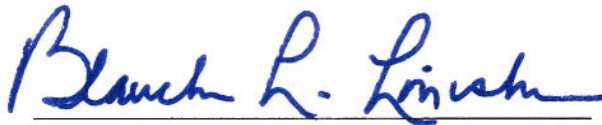
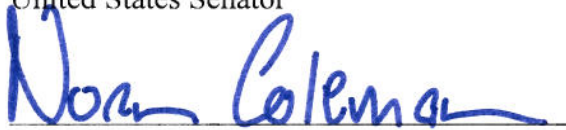
E. Benjamin Nelson
United States Senator



Evan Bayh
United States Senator



Susan M. Collins
United States Senator



United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

April 17, 2008

The Honorable Patrick J. Leahy, Chairman
Subcommittee on State, Foreign
Operations, and Related Programs
U.S. Senate Committee on Appropriations
127 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510-6031

The Honorable Judd Gregg, Ranking Member
Subcommittee on State, Foreign
Operations, and Related Programs
U.S. Senate Committee on Appropriations
127 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510-6031

Dear Chairman Leahy and Ranking Member Gregg:

The war in Iraq has come at an enormous cost to our nation in both lives and treasure. Recent estimates have placed the financial costs of the war at about \$12 billion a month, a cost borne by present and future American taxpayers.

Over the past several weeks, media and government reports have provided a clearer picture of Iraq's improved financial situation. As a result of record-high oil prices, Iraq is expected to experience a significant financial windfall through oil revenues that has been estimated to be almost \$56 billion, while domestic gas prices reach new highs and negatively impact our economy at home.

The time has come to end this blank check policy and require the Iraqis to invest in their own future. We believe that it is time for Iraq to take greater responsibility for the costs of its reconstruction and stabilization. We are pleased that the Administration agrees and that certain steps are underway to require Iraq to pay some of the war and reconstruction costs.

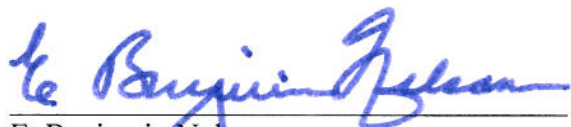
In 2003, then-Deputy Secretary of Defense Paul Wolfowitz said, "We're dealing with a country that can really finance its own reconstruction, and relatively soon." Instead, over the last five years, the United States has financed Iraq's reconstruction for more than \$45 billion. While it appears that the U.S. share of level reconstruction funding has declined, the American taxpayers are still subsidizing projects that should be funded by the Iraqis themselves. It is time for the Iraqi government to demonstrate its commitment to its own success by assuming some of the financial burden.

As Congress goes forward with the next Supplemental funding bill, we believe that efforts should be made to ensure that America ends this blank check to the Iraqi government. We intend to offer an amendment to the Supplemental to require many of these costs to be provided in the form of a loan. While it is critical that funding for reconstruction and the needs of our troops continue to be available in an accessible manner, there is no reason why our government cannot negotiate a loan repayment/reimbursement plan with the Iraqis. In addition to loans, we believe that Iraq should make direct payments and/or reimbursements for our costs where possible, including the cost of fuel consumed in Iraq by American forces. We hope that you will work with us on ensuring that American taxpayers do not continue to foot the bill for Iraq's reconstruction and certain other expenses.

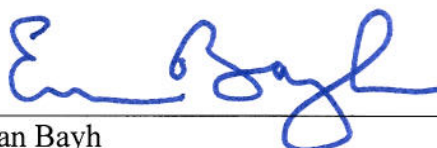
It is not our intent to punish or harm the government of Iraq; rather, we believe this is an opportunity to demonstrate Iraq's greater independence from the United States. Ultimately, it is our hope to increase Iraq's financial commitment for its own well-being while reducing the burden to the American taxpayer. It is time to end the blank check to the Iraqi government.

We look forward to working with you and the Committees in this effort.

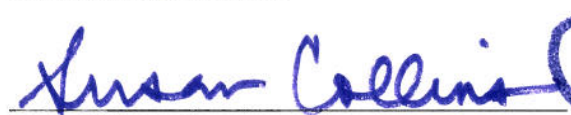
Sincerely,



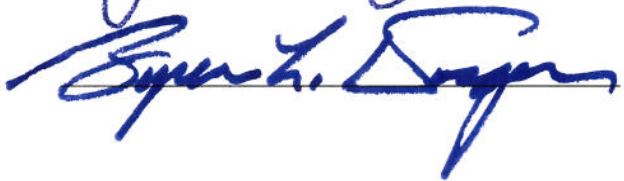
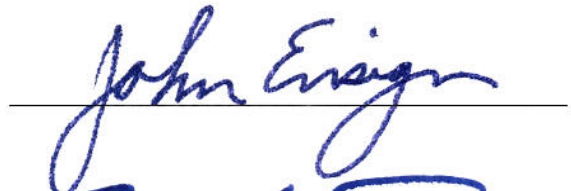
E. Benjamin Nelson
United States Senator



Evan Bayh
United States Senator



Susan M. Collins
United States Senator



United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

April 17, 2008

The Honorable Daniel K. Inouye, Chairman
Subcommittee on Defense
U.S. Senate Committee on Appropriations
119 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510-6028

The Honorable Ted Stevens, Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Defense
U.S. Senate Committee on Appropriations
119 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510-6028

Dear Chairman Inouye and Ranking Member Stevens:

The war in Iraq has come at an enormous cost to our nation in both lives and treasure. Recent estimates have placed the financial costs of the war at about \$12 billion a month, a cost borne by present and future American taxpayers.

Over the past several weeks, media and government reports have provided a clearer picture of Iraq's improved financial situation. As a result of record-high oil prices, Iraq is expected to experience a significant financial windfall through oil revenues that has been estimated to be almost \$56 billion, while domestic gas prices reach new highs and negatively impact our economy at home.

The time has come to end this blank check policy and require the Iraqis to invest in their own future. We believe that it is time for Iraq to take greater responsibility for the costs of its reconstruction and stabilization. We are pleased that the Administration agrees and that certain steps are underway to require Iraq to pay some of the war and reconstruction costs.

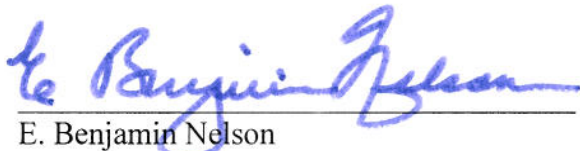
In 2003, then-Deputy Secretary of Defense Paul Wolfowitz said, "We're dealing with a country that can really finance its own reconstruction, and relatively soon." Instead, over the last five years, the United States has financed Iraq's reconstruction for more than \$45 billion. While it appears that the U.S. share of level reconstruction funding has declined, the American taxpayers are still subsidizing projects that should be funded by the Iraqis themselves. It is time for the Iraqi government to demonstrate its commitment to its own success by assuming some of the financial burden.

As Congress goes forward with the next Supplemental funding bill, we believe that efforts should be made to ensure that America ends this blank check to the Iraqi government. We intend to offer an amendment to the Supplemental to require many of these costs to be provided in the form of a loan. While it is critical that funding for reconstruction and the needs of our troops continue to be available in an accessible manner, there is no reason why our government cannot negotiate a loan repayment/reimbursement plan with the Iraqis. In addition to loans, we believe that Iraq should make direct payments and/or reimbursements for our costs where possible, including the cost of fuel consumed in Iraq by American forces. We hope that you will work with us on ensuring that American taxpayers do not continue to foot the bill for Iraq's reconstruction and certain other expenses.

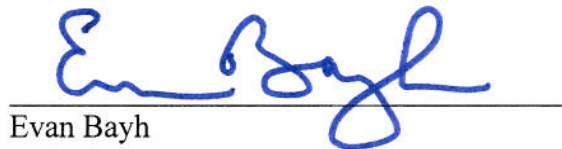
It is not our intent to punish or harm the government of Iraq; rather, we believe this is an opportunity to demonstrate Iraq's greater independence from the United States. Ultimately, it is our hope to increase Iraq's financial commitment for its own well-being while reducing the burden to the American taxpayer. It is time to end the blank check to the Iraqi government.

We look forward to working with you and the Committees in this effort.

Sincerely,



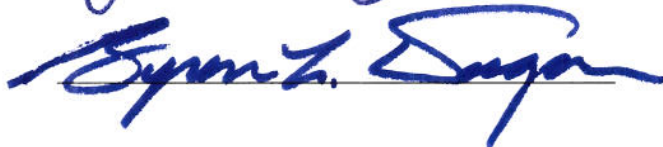
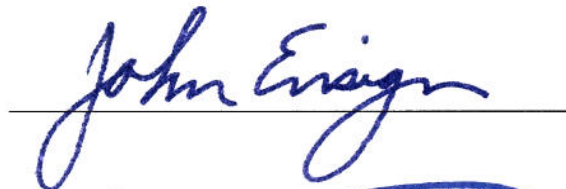
E. Benjamin Nelson
United States Senator



Evan Bayh
United States Senator



Susan M. Collins
United States Senator



United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

April 17, 2008

The Honorable Patrick J. Leahy, Chairman
Subcommittee on State, Foreign
Operations, and Related Programs
U.S. Senate Committee on Appropriations
127 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510-6031

The Honorable Judd Gregg, Ranking Member
Subcommittee on State, Foreign
Operations, and Related Programs
U.S. Senate Committee on Appropriations
127 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510-6031

Dear Chairman Leahy and Ranking Member Gregg:

The war in Iraq has come at an enormous cost to our nation in both lives and treasure. Recent estimates have placed the financial costs of the war at about \$12 billion a month, a cost borne by present and future American taxpayers.

Over the past several weeks, media and government reports have provided a clearer picture of Iraq's improved financial situation. As a result of record-high oil prices, Iraq is expected to experience a significant financial windfall through oil revenues that has been estimated to be almost \$56 billion, while domestic gas prices reach new highs and negatively impact our economy at home.

The time has come to end this blank check policy and require the Iraqis to invest in their own future. We believe that it is time for Iraq to take greater responsibility for the costs of its reconstruction and stabilization. We are pleased that the Administration agrees and that certain steps are underway to require Iraq to pay some of the war and reconstruction costs.

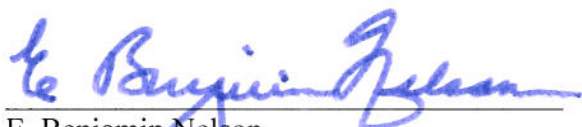
In 2003, then-Deputy Secretary of Defense Paul Wolfowitz said, "We're dealing with a country that can really finance its own reconstruction, and relatively soon." Instead, over the last five years, the United States has financed Iraq's reconstruction for more than \$45 billion. While it appears that the U.S. share of level reconstruction funding has declined, the American taxpayers are still subsidizing projects that should be funded by the Iraqis themselves. It is time for the Iraqi government to demonstrate its commitment to its own success by assuming some of the financial burden.

As Congress goes forward with the next Supplemental funding bill, we believe that efforts should be made to ensure that America ends this blank check to the Iraqi government. We intend to offer an amendment to the Supplemental to require many of these costs to be provided in the form of a loan. While it is critical that funding for reconstruction and the needs of our troops continue to be available in an accessible manner, there is no reason why our government cannot negotiate a loan repayment/reimbursement plan with the Iraqis. In addition to loans, we believe that Iraq should make direct payments and/or reimbursements for our costs where possible, including the cost of fuel consumed in Iraq by American forces. We hope that you will work with us on ensuring that American taxpayers do not continue to foot the bill for Iraq's reconstruction and certain other expenses.

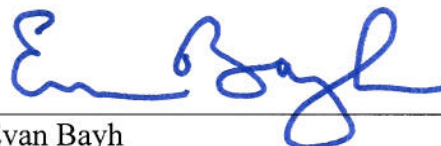
It is not our intent to punish or harm the government of Iraq; rather, we believe this is an opportunity to demonstrate Iraq's greater independence from the United States. Ultimately, it is our hope to increase Iraq's financial commitment for its own well-being while reducing the burden to the American taxpayer. It is time to end the blank check to the Iraqi government.

We look forward to working with you and the Committees in this effort.

Sincerely,



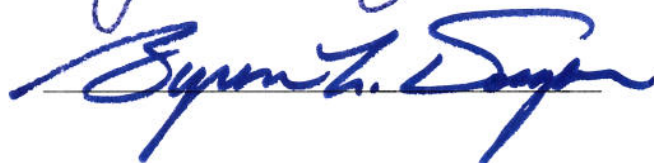
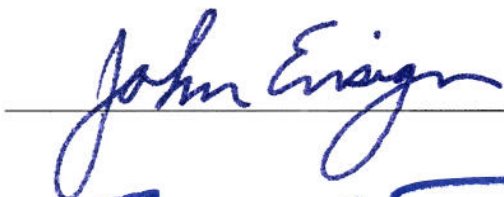
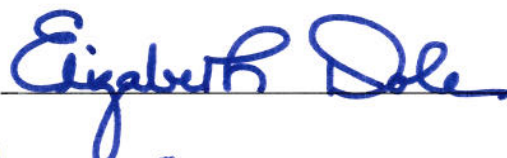
E. Benjamin Nelson
United States Senator



Evan Bayh
United States Senator



Susan M. Collins
United States Senator



United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

April 17, 2008

The Honorable Robert C. Byrd, Chairman
Committee on Appropriations
United States Senate
U.S. Capitol, Room S-131
Washington, DC 20510-6025

The Honorable Thad Cochran, Ranking Member
Committee on Appropriations
United States Senate
U.S. Capitol, Room S-131
Washington, DC 20510-6025

Dear Chairman Byrd and Ranking Member Cochran:

The war in Iraq has come at an enormous cost to our nation in both lives and treasure. Recent estimates have placed the financial costs of the war at about \$12 billion a month, a cost borne by present and future American taxpayers.

Over the past several weeks, media and government reports have provided a clearer picture of Iraq's improved financial situation. As a result of record-high oil prices, Iraq is expected to experience a significant financial windfall through oil revenues that has been estimated to be almost \$56 billion, while domestic gas prices reach new highs and negatively impact our economy at home.

The time has come to end this blank check policy and require the Iraqis to invest in their own future. We believe that it is time for Iraq to take greater responsibility for the costs of its reconstruction and stabilization. We are pleased that the Administration agrees and that certain steps are underway to require Iraq to pay some of the war and reconstruction costs.

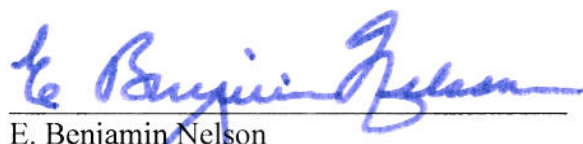
In 2003, then-Deputy Secretary of Defense Paul Wolfowitz said, "We're dealing with a country that can really finance its own reconstruction, and relatively soon." Instead, over the last five years, the United States has financed Iraq's reconstruction for more than \$45 billion. While it appears that the U.S. share of level reconstruction funding has declined, the American taxpayers are still subsidizing projects that should be funded by the Iraqis themselves. It is time for the Iraqi government to demonstrate its commitment to its own success by assuming some of the financial burden.

As Congress goes forward with the next Supplemental funding bill, we believe that efforts should be made to ensure that America ends this blank check to the Iraqi government. We intend to offer an amendment to the Supplemental to require many of these costs to be provided in the form of a loan. While it is critical that funding for reconstruction and the needs of our troops continue to be available in an accessible manner, there is no reason why our government cannot negotiate a loan repayment/reimbursement plan with the Iraqis. In addition to loans, we believe that Iraq should make direct payments and/or reimbursements for our costs where possible, including the cost of fuel consumed in Iraq by American forces. We hope that you will work with us on ensuring that American taxpayers do not continue to foot the bill for Iraq's reconstruction and certain other expenses.

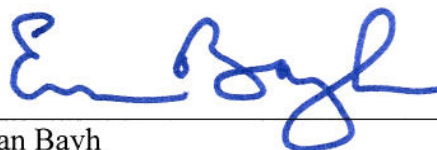
It is not our intent to punish or harm the government of Iraq; rather, we believe this is an opportunity to demonstrate Iraq's greater independence from the United States. Ultimately, it is our hope to increase Iraq's financial commitment for its own well-being while reducing the burden to the American taxpayer. It is time to end the blank check to the Iraqi government.

We look forward to working with you and the Committees in this effort.

Sincerely,



E. Benjamin Nelson
United States Senator



Evan Bayh
United States Senator



Susan M. Collins
United States Senator

